

FRIDAY

June 26, 2015

**'THE EXECUTION OF CURAÇAO'S 2015 BUDGET IS ON COURSE, HOWEVER THERE ARE RISK FACTORS INVOLVED'**

Page #6



## F.A.D.A. INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

Page #2



**OUR AIRPORT  
IS THE  
FIRST AND LAST  
IMPRESSION**

Page #3



**PINK  
WEDDING**

Page #7



# F.A.D.A. International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



 **UNODC**  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



BY resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987, the General Assembly decided to observe 26th of June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse. This resolution recommended further action with regard to the report and conclusions of the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Drugs destroy families all around the world. This is also the case in Aruba. Many domestic problems are related to the use of legal or illegal drugs. This problem is not very easy to avoid. Wherever you turn, you can find drugs, and sometimes even smell it. Legal Drugs are cigarettes or alcohol. Illicit drugs are marijuana, cocaine, heroin etc.

The General Assembly recognized that despite continued and increased efforts by the international community, the world drug problem continues to constitute a serious threat to public health, the safety and well-being of humanity, in particular young people.

Let's Develop our Lives, our Communities and our Identities, Without Drugs. This is the theme of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. F.A.D.A. as with others in the world unites at this cause. This is what we bring across in all our daily activities and discussions, not only for our youth but for the whole community of Aruba. We want to create awareness in the community on the consequences of drug abuse and also the illicit trafficking of it, not only on this special date but every day.

If we unite to fight this drug problem, we will develop a Live, a Community, and an Identity free of drugs. For more information, please contact F.A.D.A. at 583-2999.

# Our Airport is the first and last impression of our island for the tourist

Minister Otmar Oduber



**MINISTER** Otmar Oduber took a tour at the facilities of our Airport to attain detailed information of all the projects that are in process and those that will soon be realized.

After the agreement with the Schiphol Group, plans to expand and renovate the Airport of Aruba has started immediately where the main focus is to elevate the service quality we offer to the users of our International Airport.

The Airport of Aruba has been operating for 5 years now under a more commercial concept. The aim is to be more attentive to all the visitors and provide overall satisfaction. In the past, the user will come into the Airport and only focuses on getting on the plane. Mr. Oduber says that our aim is to provide the best service to the users of the Airport so they can have a unique experience from the moment they arrive until the moment they leave the airport. The Airport is the first and last impression of our island for the tourist.

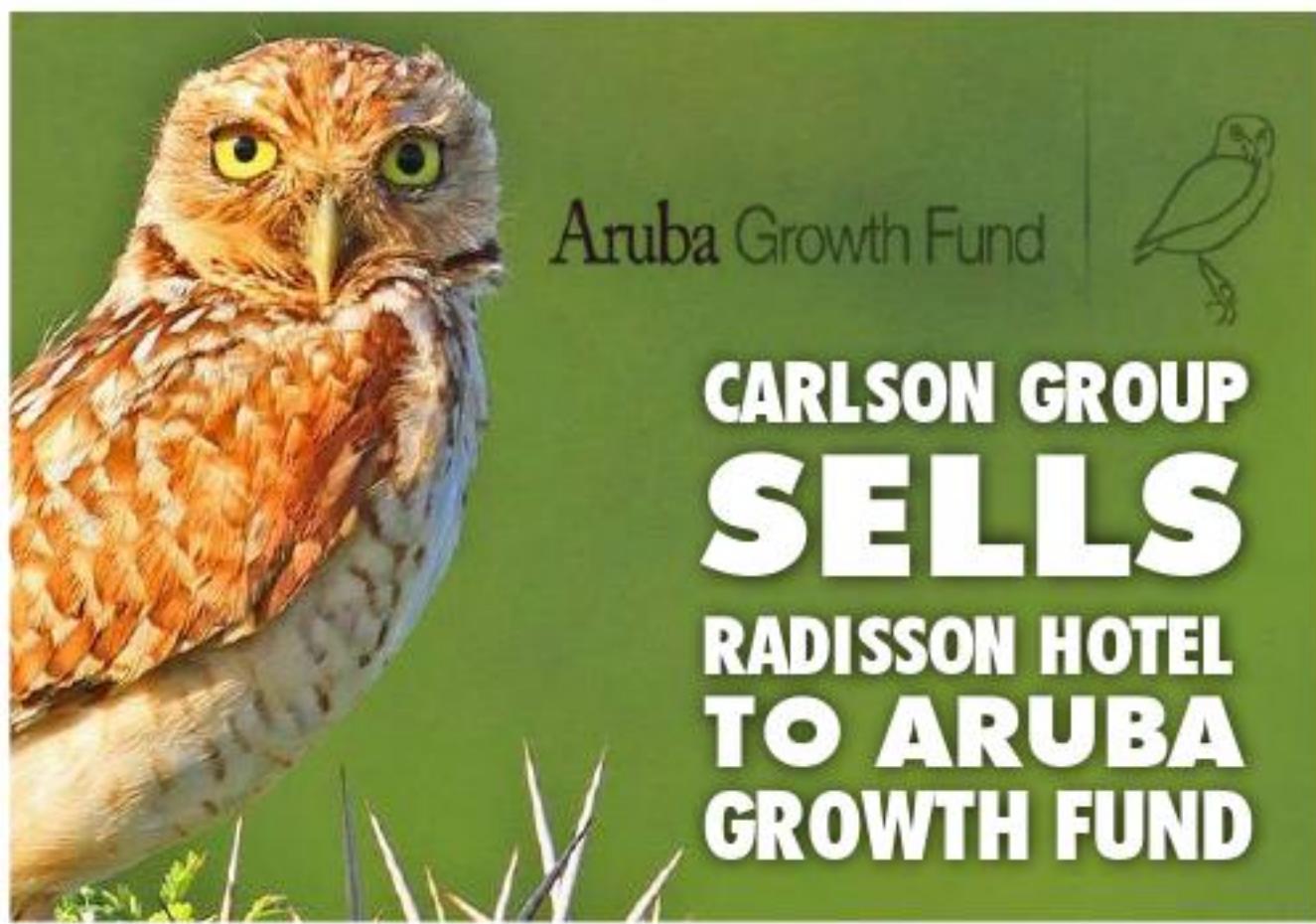
The changes that are taking place at the Airport are the upgrading of the VIP rooms, the WIFI project that will soon be working, all the restrooms will be completely renovated and the custom and immigration area will also receive a complete uplift. All the booths will be changed and the baggage claim area will be completely modernized.

In the effort to give the Airport a complete uplift, some more expensive changes will be included. At the moment there are 8 gates. Three more gates will be added. There is also the possibility for 6 planes to park at the Apron.

The expansion and renovation of the Airport is a huge investment. The investment this year is calculated to be 16 million dollars and for the next year up to 70 million dollars. At least 86 million dollars will be invested in making the Airport more up to date in the quality we want to achieve.

"I am very happy with the changes that are taking place at our International Airport to offer an overall passenger satisfaction experience. I congratulate my whole team and everyone who are working at the Airport and understand the concept of offering the users a better experience during their visit at our International Airport. The feeling of One Happy Island must be our main target," concluded Minister Oduber.





**AFTER** almost nine months of negotiations Aruba Growth Fund (AGF) finally signed an agreement with the owner of Radisson, the Carlson Group, to take over the hotel. Both parties agreed on almost all the issues about the purchase of the hotel.

The sale of the Radisson almost fell through. Carlson Group and Aruba Growth Fund were negotiating for months when Carlson Group, owner of the Radisson, started to negotiate with a third party. The Spanish all-inclusive hotel chain

RIU suddenly showed interest and Carlson and RIU decided to start negotiating. Aruba Growth Fund stepped up and took the Carlson Group to court. Carlson Group then took the decision to sit with the Aruba Growth Foundation to discuss the possibilities to reach a final decision about the Radisson Hotel and they finally reached an agreement. RIU has withdrawn completely after the mediation of the Government whose position about this matter has always been based on the general interest of the country, and an 'All

Inclusive" at the Radisson is not desired. Judicial intervention is no longer necessary.



## LAST WEEK for EARLY BIRD TICKETS Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival!



**HAVEN'T** picked up your early bird tickets for Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival yet? Well, you better be quick because they run out on July 1st!



The ninth edition of the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival is upon us. On September 25th and 26th, Aruba will once again enjoy great live music from some of the best artists around, all in a great and relaxed atmosphere. In the past six editions, CSJF has developed from a passion project by a group of local music lovers into one of the most fun and surprising music festivals in the region, encompassing not only jazz but also all sorts of popular genres from Latin to pop. In fact, the festival has become quite known for booking the right mix of already popular – if not legendary – acts and not so well-known, but no less exciting bands and artists.

This year is no different, with great names like Earth Wind & Fire Experience featuring Al McKay and fusion legend Mike Stern, together with artists like Jessy J and Roberta Gambarini, who you may not know yet but may very well become future favorites. Of course there's plenty of space for local musical talent, and if you're a fan of Latin music in particular, check out Saturday's line-up featuring the legendary Grupo Niche and Maite Hontelé, who in the past years has been taking the international salsa scene by storm.

Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival will feature three stages at the edge of the Seaport Mall, one of the most accessible and beautiful locations in Oranjestad. But what happens around those stages makes it much more than just a great music festival. If you like dance and art, there will be performances and a special gallery featuring local artists. If great food is your thing, some of Aruba's top restaurants and caterers will offer their dishes right on the premises.

Tickets are already on sale and right now there's a special early bird price of \$40 per ticket per night. Starting July 1st, the pre-sale price for a ticket will be \$55, and during the festival tickets will sell for \$70 a piece at the door. So be sure to catch that funky worm and save by buying early bird tickets, because the clock is ticking!

# Consumer sentiment continues to improve in the first quarter of 2015

FOR the second consecutive survey period, confidence of Aruban consumers improved somewhat in the first quarter of 2015. The Consumer Confidence Index edged up by 0.5 index point, reaching 94.8 this quarter, however still remaining in the pessimistic territory (see Chart 1). This small increase may have likely been

attributed to the fact that the survey period occurred before the Easter break as the component of consumption habits related to vacation improved significantly. 48.5 percent of the respondents indicated that taking a vacation right now was suitable (14.5 percentage points higher than the previous quarter). It should be noted

that this does not indicate that consumers actually went on vacation but simply believe it would have been fitting. Additionally, 33.3 percent of consumers noted that it was appropriate to buy some major appliance at the present time, an improvement of 5.0 percentage points compared to the previous quarter. These two components of consumption habits, the others being sentiments on purchasing a car, taking out a loan and taking out a mortgage, had the largest positive contribution to the consumer confidence index this survey period. Furthermore, consumers reported a less negative outlook on the present and future labor market compared to the previous quarter.

On the other hand, respondents indicated deterioration in their personal financial situation during the previous six months, and for the coming six months. Moreover, more than half of the respondents (54.8 percent) perceived a worsening in the economic and business conditions compared to six months ago (12 percentage points higher compared to the previous quarter). 42.8 percent expects future economic and business conditions to worsen (2.5 percentage points higher compared to the previous quarter). It is evident that consumers' perception on consumption habits contradict with their perceptions on their personal situation and economic conditions. A possible explanation is that consumers may find it appropriate to make purchases but may not have the means to actually make these purchases.

Chart 1: Consumer Confidence Index



Table 1: Indices

	Consumer Confidence Index	Present Situation Index	Expectation Index
2013 I	98.5	100.1	101.3
2013 II	96.9	97.7	99.1
2013 III	98.6	99.1	101.4
2013 IV	98.0	99.9	101.0
2014 I	97.3	96.9	98.9
2014 II	96.9	96.0	97.3
2014 III	93.8	92.5	93.4
2014 IV	94.3	93.5	95.3
2015 I	94.8	93.9	95.4

Consumers' responses on the current government's financial position remained somewhat divided as 55.3 percent indicated a worsening, while 27.8 percent signaled that the government's financial position remained the same as six months ago. 8.3 percent believed that the government's financial position had improved compared to six months ago. Finally, a large group of respondents (44.8 percent) stated that the government's financial position will worsen in the future. This sentiment has increased by 4.5 percentage points compared to the previous quarter. The complete presentation of the results of this survey can be downloaded from the CBA's website.

Cft Chairman Age Bakker: caution is advised

# 'The execution of Curaçao's 2015 budget is on course, however there are risk factors involved'

**WILLEMSTAD** – The budget realization figures of the first months of 2015 seem to be positive, however there are a number of developments that pose a risk to the Curaçao budget. The biggest risks concern the social funds, some government companies and the new hospital which is under construction: Hòspital Nobo Otrabanda. Moreover, a clear list of priorities should be drawn up for new government investments.

In the last week of June, the Board of financial supervision of Curaçao and Sint Maarten (Cft) visited Curaçao, where meetings were held with the Governor, the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Finance and the financial committee of Parliament. The Board also spoke with the directors of the Curaçao Drydock Company and the Analytisch Diagnostisch Centrum, as well as the responsible ministers.

## EXECUTION 2015 BUDGET

The Board evaluated the budget execution report on the first quarter of 2015. These preliminary figures seem positive. The budget is balanced and there seems to be room for a reinforcement of the general reserves or an addition to the 'schommelfonds'. This may in fact prove to be quite necessary, because although the government has control over its own budget, there are risks which in time may lead to extra expenditures. These include the persisting deficits of the social funds, some ailing government companies, the delay in the construction of the new hospital and the operational deficits of the Sehos hospital. The Board requested a substantiation of the dividend payments made by the Curaçao Port Authority (CPA), as included in the draft of the first budget amendment.

## CAPITAL SERVICE AND LENDING

The Board requested the drafting of a realistic capital account, with a clear list of priorities that is also more in line with the existing execution capacity. The investment amount of almost ANG 500 million (9% of GDP) which is included in the budget 2015 is not realistic and rather resembles a wish list. The planning of investments and the monitoring of their progress should be intensified. The borrowing room of the government, however, is limited by the financial norms. Still, considering the current historically low interest rates on government bonds, when new loans are issued, a sustainable debt position should be taken into consideration, besides the interest burden norm. This is quite crucial, seeing that Curaçao currently has a public debt of around 40% of its GDP, which the IMF deems as an upper limit. Caution is thus advised when issuing new loans. Therefore, an agreement was reached with the Minister of Finance that the upcoming petition for the issuance of a new loan will be harmonized with an realistic investment plan. This should create additional economic impulses.

## SVB

Last year, the deficits of the social funds increased again which called for additional measures. Some of these measures have already been introduced, while others are delayed, which may potentially lead to less economization than expected. The implementation of the measures to make the AOV fund sound again, is the area that is most delayed. This is very cumbersome, considering that the exhaustion of the 'schommelfonds' is nearer than was initially assumed. Hence, it is of the utmost importance that all proposed measures are implemented as soon as possible, and that the situation is closely monitored, so that, if necessary, additional measures can be timely prepared.



## PUBLIC COMPANIES

Some public companies pose a risk to the budget. However, the plans of action that are in place seem to be executed in an expeditious way. In the coming period, it will become clear whether the steps included in the action plans are sufficiently adequate to make the public companies sustainably sound. On a brighter note, some public companies are performing well. The timely submission of annual reports remains crucial, especially in light of the intentions of the government to include dividend income in the budget. A dividend policy is necessary to that effect.

## HOSPITAL NOBO OTROBANDA/SEHOS

Progress is noticeable in the construction of the new hospital. However, the Board also identifies a number of risks. The delays in the construction process may lead to setbacks with regard to the total costs. The Board therefore requested an update of the business case. In addition, Sehos has an operational deficit, which underlines the fact that affordable and quality healthcare is not only a matter of infrastructure but also of effective management. The Board advised the Council of Ministers to encourage the ministerial steering group led by the Prime Minister to take charge and proactively monitor the progress of the new hospital. Further pressure on the budget should be prevented in any event.

## Aruba Regatta 2015

August 14, 15 and 16 - 2015

THE 7th Aruba International Regatta is taking place on August 14, 15 and 16 at Surfside Beach, next to the airport in Aruba. There will be about 80 sails on the water off the beach between the Airport and Oranjestad, including a fleet of beach cats. New this year will be a self-built boat race, a Stand-Up Paddleboard competition and micro-boat races. Join the Aruba International Regatta for spectacular Yacht Races, Sunfish Races, Beachcat Races, Optimist Races, Windsurf Competition, Kitesurf Competition, Kitesurf-Freestyle Demonstrations, Beach Parties and much more. Spectators can watch the action right from the beach.



## PINK WEDDING FLAMINGOS GET MARRIED IN ARUBA

### TRUE STORY:

flamingos are monogamous for life when they mate. So it wasn't that far-fetched to have a wedding for two particular love birds that already live in an ideal honeymoon spot.

Allie and Noah, residents of the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino, got married in honor of National Pink Flamingo Day – Allie wearing a bridal dress of course, and Noah wearing a bow tie. The private ceremony was held at Renaissance Private Island in Aruba, with some cute video and photos to document the occasion.



The resort celebrated the wedding by turning its bar pink and serving pink cocktails and cupcakes to guests. It also pledged to donate a florin (the Aruban currency) for each like or share of the wedding on Renaissance Facebook page to Animal Rights Aruba. The resort's seven pink flamingos are the only such birds in Aruba.

## Aruba Tourism Authority Honored William and Eileen at Holliday Inn



RECENTLY Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring devoted visitors as 'Distinguished Visitors' of Aruba. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for a number of consecutive years.

'Distinguished Honoring' is for loyal visitors who visit the destination between 10 to 19 times and those who visit Aruba for 20 or more consecutive years are being honored with the 'Goodwill Ambassadors' for 35 or more with the 'Emerald Ambassadors'

Ms. Darline S. de Cuba representing Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mr. Reginald and Mr. John de Cuba honored loyal members of the Holiday Inn with a well-deserved 'Distinguished Visitors' certificate.

Mr. William and Mrs. Eileen Norris Mora are residents of Middle Village New York and feel Aruba is their second home. They have been visiting the island for the past years with much devotion and warm feelings. The reasons they gave for returning to the island were; the warm inviting sun, the gracious treatment from everyone, the absolute feeling of safety everywhere /anytime and the unending selection of restaurants. Congratulations to the happy family Mora.

# ARUBA SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 26th & 27th, 2015

THE beautiful island of Aruba will host a brand new multi-day music event, the Aruba Summer Music Festival, which will kick off tonight, June 26th 2015 at the Harbor Square Arena. International Latin Grammy Award winners will showcase a variety of music genres alongside Aruba's best local bands at the national port of Aruba! Headlining for the Aruba Summer Music Festival is the popular Pitbull, the American artist from Miami with multiple hit-songs, awards and successful concert tours. Most recently he concluded an extensive tour in Asia and in 2014 Pitbull and Enrique Iglesias sold out multiple venues in the US with a joined-tour.

The famous Colombian singer-songwriter Carlos Vives is another Latin sensation who will perform in the Aruba Summer Music Festival. Vives currently is very popular around the world, because of his long list of hits, concert production and charms. Another artist who has already confirmed to be participating in this festival is "Bebe de la Salsa" from Puerto Rico Jerry Rivera who has revolutionized the world of salsa in the 90's. His unmistakable way of interpreting salsa and his charismatic presence has made thousands of fans fall for him and he always 'shakes' the venues he performs at. Another well-known artist who will be on stage during the Aruba Summer Music Festival is the merengue and bachata star also born in Puerto Rico Elvis Crespo, known especially for his great hits 'Pintame' and 'Suavemente'. For the younger fans the most popular reggaeton artist Nicky Jam, will be performing in the Aruba Summer Music Festival. He is one of the most prestigious singers in the Latin music scene.

## LINE UP:

**June 26 2015 (Friday Night)**

Grammy award winner Carlos Vives

Merengue giant Elvis Crespo

Salsa legend Jerry Rivera.

**June 27 2015 (Saturday Night)**

Reggaeton artist Nicky Jam

The Famous Pitbull.

Together with these international artists there will also be our local DJ's, bands and artists performing like Zion, DJ Gogo, DJ Beatz, Nutzbeatz, N'Fuzion, Tsunami, Le Groove, D'Licious and Robert Jeandor and his Solo Banda Show. Local transportation for the visitors from abroad will be taken care of by the prestigious Fofoti Tours. During the festival nights there will be special parking places and a shuttle service to take everybody to and from the festival area. Attendees will have the option to choose between 4 different sections inside the venue. Concerts and supported by The Aruba Tourism Authority.

**Carlos Vives**



**Jerry Rivera**



**Elvis Crespo**



**Nicky Jam**



**Pitbull**



# USFOL Volunteers Build a Soccer Field at Siloam



ON June 18, nine volunteers from the U.S. Forward Operating Location Curaçao (USFOL) visited the Siloam Orphanage to deliver 45 kilos of donated goods. Also, the volunteers devoted three hours building a soccer field and interacting and playing with the children.

Siloam Orphanage provides for children with a variety of needs—from toddlers who have been abandoned to children who have mental and physical disabilities.

The USFOL involvement with local organizations demonstrates their eagerness for community involvement and their long standing appreciation for the hospitality received from the citizens of Curaçao.

A little faith  
will take you  
to heaven,  
Full faith will  
bring heaven  
to you

## Journey of a Sathguru

Brahmrishi Shri Guruvanandji Swamy's (Shri Gurudev) spiritual journey began in his infancy under miraculous circumstances. Yogiraj Devraha Baba, one of the most esteemed saints of recent times, brought Shri Gurudev to his ashram to save his life from a terminal illness. Devraha Baba predicted that the young child one day would achieve the pinnacle of spirituality and he will use that divine energy to serve humanity.

Yogiraj's predictions have come true. Shri Gurudev has invoked all the Chakras (spiritual power centres) of his Kundalini (primal energy) and with 45 years of spiritual discipline (Sadhana) he has acquired all the Siddhis, the perfected spiritual powers of the ancient Vedic Sages.

Shri Gurudev is using the enormous divine energy that he has acquired, to help those in distress and to uplift the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the globe. He has travelled to over 172 countries to enrich people with the art of living a moral and spiritual life. Shri Gurudev's mission is to guide us to liberation from the cycle of birth and death while we fulfill our worldly duties.

Shri Gurudev holds numerous degrees including M.Tech. from IIT, PhD in Astrology and Masters in Sanskrit, Vedas, and Literature. He has participated in several international religious conferences, including the "All Religion World Conferences" where he has been honored with the "Best Personality" gold medal seven times.

Join Us For A Sacred Audience  
With The Sathguru Whose  
Blessings Can Change Both The  
Direction And Destiny Of Your  
Life.

Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup> 2015

Blessings by Gurudev

7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Free Admission

Language: Hindi

Holiday INN  
Las Palmas Ballroom  
Palm Beach  
Noord, Aruba

Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> 2015

Blessings by Gurudev

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

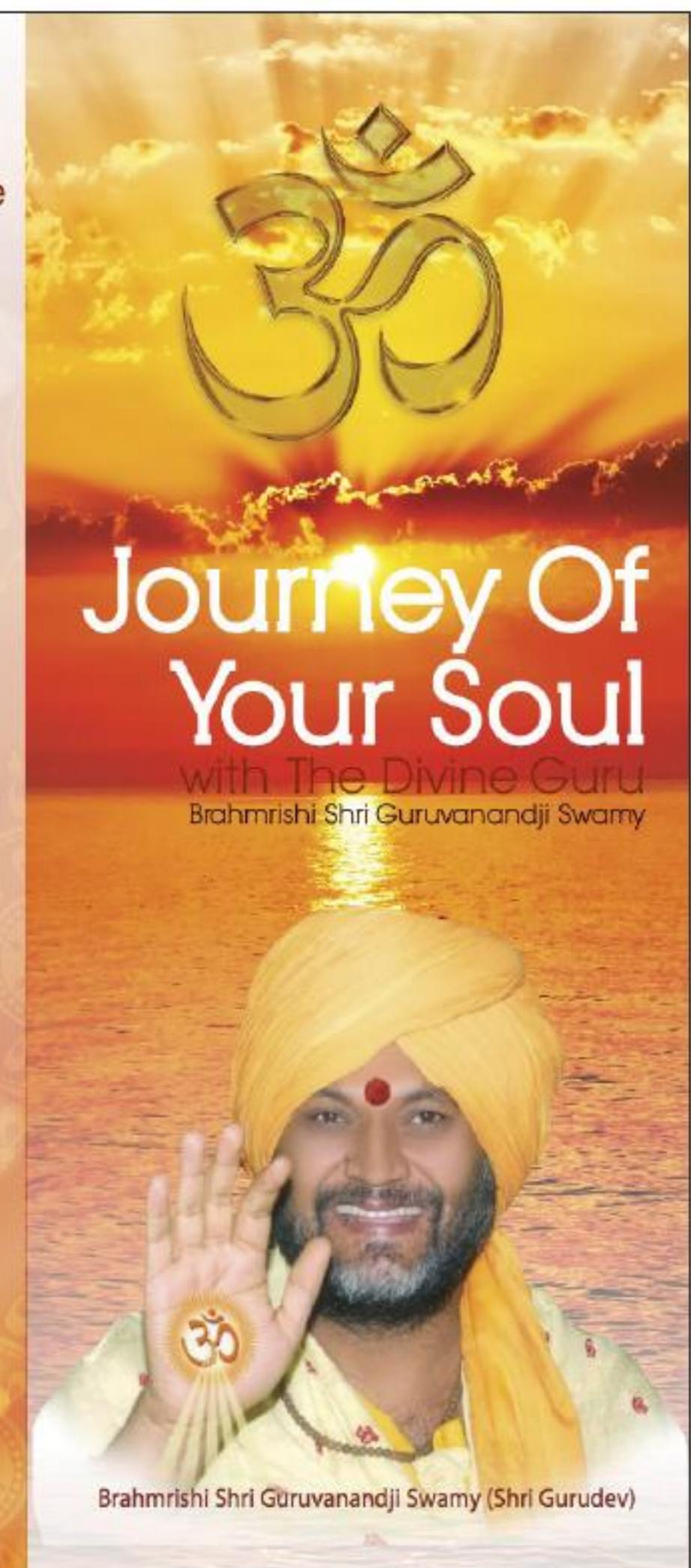
Free Admission

Language: Hindi & English

Alhambra Mall  
Alhambra Ballroom  
J.E. Irausquin, Boulevard 47,  
Oranjestad-Aruba

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# Playa Linda marks the mid-year with team spirit

IN keeping to its annual tradition of providing additional appreciation for its team members, Playa Linda Beach Resort hosted yet another joyous mid-year celebration. The entire crew could be seen out on a recent Friday evening, sharing laughs over an excellent meal at the Double Down Sports Bar and Grill, at the Tropicana Club and Casino.

Unlike the more formal occasions of year-end celebrations and anniversary honors, the mid-year party is a time of laid back fun. Evening highlights included a slot machine competition, with prizes for the top five winners, as well as an opportunity to take to the dance floor.

The mid-year party was particularly warranted this year, as the resort continues to garner high grades from resort members and guests, even while an upgrade of the resort property is currently being carried out. Much of the success of the Playa Linda Beach Resort and its popularity as a top timeshare can be attributed to the talented and excellent service provided by the resort's close-knit team.



# Obamacare subsidies preserved in US Supreme Court ruling



THE US Supreme Court has upheld a key portion of President Barack Obama's healthcare law, preserving health insurance for millions of Americans.

In a 6-3 decision, the justices said that tax subsidies that make health insurance affordable for low-income individuals can continue.

The ruling preserves the law known as Obamacare, which Mr Obama considers a major part of his presidential legacy.

Republicans have vowed to continue fighting the law.

"We've got more work to do, but what we're not going to do is unravel what has now been woven into the fabric of America," Mr Obama said.

The case, known as King v Burwell, was the second major challenge the law has faced in the US's highest court.

Unlike in many other western countries, the US does not have a single-payer healthcare system. Private companies, rather than the US government, provide health insurance for US citizens.

The enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) - one of Mr Obama's most significant and controversial domestic achievements - in 2010 mandated that every American had to purchase private insurance. It provided the subsidies to allow many to do so.

In 2012, the mandate portion of the law was challenged in the court. The justices ruled to preserve it.

In that de-  
c i -

sion, as in the decision on Thursday, Chief Justice John Roberts surprised observers by siding with his liberal colleagues in support of the law.

"Congress passed the Affordable Care act to improve health insurance markets, not to destroy them," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the opinion.

Justice Anthony Kennedy dissented in 2012, but sided with the majority on Thursday.

Had the court made the opposite decision, an estimated 8.7 million people in the US would have been at risk of losing the aid that makes healthcare affordable.

Demonstrators gathered outside the court as early on Thursday morning.

Reading updates on their mobile phones, the crowd became jubilant when they learned mid-morning that the court had ruled in their favor. Some began dancing, while others chanted "If you're covered and you know it clap your hands."

"This is a big sigh of relief for millions across the country," said Ron Pollack of Families USA, a health-care advocacy organization. "The ACA is not just the law of the land; it will remain the law of the land".

"Today is a good day for healthcare in America," said activist Benton Strong. "I hope this is the end of the line."

Demonstrators opposing the subsidies did not have a large visible presence.

Justice Anthony Scalia wrote in his dissent that the Supreme Court is setting a precedent of favouring some laws over others. "We should start calling this law Scotuscare" Justice Scalia's wrote, referring to the court's acronym. "Today's interpretation is not merely unnatural; it is unheard of."

Congressional Republicans have voted more than 50 times to undo the law.



# OBAMACARE

INTERNATIONAL 11



# North Korea unveils gleaming NEW AIRPORT for Pyongyang

PICTURES of the shopping and amenities at North Korea's new airport terminal have been published in state media.

Several pages of the daily newspaper Rodong Sinmun showed images of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his wife inspecting the restaurants and shops.

North Korea has unveiled several large building projects in recent years but human rights groups say much of the country still lives in poor conditions.

The airport, which will serve only a few flights, is set to open on 1 July.

Earlier this month, the country said it was facing its worst drought in a century, sparking fears of worsening food shortages.

The glass-fronted building is reported to be six times larger than the old terminal but passenger numbers are likely to be low.

Most of the tiny handful of flights to and from the North Korean capital carries Chinese tourists and North Koreans on official business between Pyongyang and Beijing.

Mr Kim described the building as a "landmark of the Songun [military-first] era", according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

He told workers and officials he was "very satisfied to see the terminal well built in harmony with modern aesthetic taste and national character", KCNA said.

He was also reported to have called for the construction of a high-speed railway and a motorway

between Pyongyang and the airport, some 24km (15 miles) northwest of the capital.

Since taking power in 2011, Mr. Kim has promised to raise living standards in the isolated country, but most of his signature projects have been beyond the reach of average North Koreans, like ski resorts and water parks.

Many North Koreans suffer from a lack of food, drinking water and stable electricity.

## North Korea's troubles

- Average per capita income of \$1,000-\$2,000 (£640-£1,280) per year, compared to more than \$20,000 in South Korea.
- Suffered famine from 1995 to 1997 after series of droughts and floods
- Almost a third of children under five are stunted by malnutrition, says UN
- About 20% of pregnant and breast-feeding women also malnourished
- More than two million people receiving help from UN World Food Program



# CRITICISM of Pakistani Government INTENSIFIES

as Heat-Wave Death Toll Tops 1,000

THE Pakistan government continued to face the nation's ire Wednesday over what critics call its inadequate preparation for and response to a devastating heat wave sweeping the southern Sindh province.

Opposition lawmakers slammed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's ruling party in Parliament over the repeated power cuts and water shortages that have considerably worsened the crisis, Pakistan's Dawn newspaper reported. Many accused the government of "inaction" in the face of hundreds of deaths in the provincial capital, Karachi — the country's largest city — and its surrounding areas.

"There is a problem of very poor governance, and in normal circumstances it is not so exposed," Khalid Rahman, director general of the Institute of Policy Studies in Pakistan's capital Islamabad stated. "In this very extraordinary heat wave, it has exposed so many things."

Over 1,000 people have now died from heatstroke or related medical problems, a majority of them poor and elderly people without access to air-conditioning. The escalating problems from the heat wave prompted the government to declare a public holiday on Wednesday so people could stay indoors, and though the resumption of sea breezes from the country's

southern coast contributed to a lowering of the overall temperature and a reduction in the number of fatalities, there are still thousands more undergoing treatment at various hospitals across the region. The Pakistani army and a paramilitary force, the Rangers, have also stepped in, setting up relief camps for heatstroke patients, while various nongovernment and volunteer organizations have been distributing water and medicine outside hospitals.

"Today was a lot better," Anwar Kazmi, a spokesman for the Edhi Foundation that runs Karachi's largest morgue, said. "We've had 58 deaths today, compared to yesterday when the death toll rose to 300."

Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Pakistan's Water and Power Minister, attempted to deflect the blame from his government and delink the power shortages, which Pakistan has long grappled with, from the heat wave.

"The federal government is not responsible if there is a water shortage in Karachi," he said in Parliament. "We are ready for accountability, but it's not



appropriate to blame us for each and everything."

Rahman, however, says there is a lot the government could have and should have done differently.

"In these days of technology-driven information available well in advance, the government should have come up with an emergency plan as well as some kind of awareness campaign for the public and some emergency centers," he says.

"Unfortunately, despite so many deaths the governments, both provincial as well as federal, did not accept the responsibility. Instead they started blaming each other."

## Flash flooding hits Russia's Olympic city Sochi

RESIDENTS have been evacuated from Sochi in Russia after flash flooding submerged part of the city that staged the Winter Olympics in 2014.

Several hours of torrential rain brought trains to a standstill and rendered roads impassable in the Black Sea resort. Sochi international airport had to be closed and a Formula 1 circuit in the nearby Adler district was flooded. A state of emergency was declared but there were no reports of casualties.

"There's no water, no gas, no electricity. They say it could be back tonight or maybe tomorrow," Alla Atakyan, a resident of Adler, told Reuters news agency.

### Snakes

Footage showed residents with water up to their knees, one attempting to clear her property with a broom. In one village, a snake could be seen swimming through the floodwater.

Anatoly Pakhomov, the mayor of Sochi, told Russia's Interfax news agency that a state of emergency had been declared. Sochi saw more than three weeks' worth of rain in an hour, environmental officials told Interfax, flooding the Hosta, Kudepsta, and Herota rivers. Local authorities have reportedly warned that tornados may form off the coast and move inland.

The flash flooding follows a similar but worse episode last week, further south in the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

Severe flooding in the Georgian capital Tbilisi killed at least 19 people and caused extensive damage. Dozens of animals escaped from Tbilisi zoo, including a tiger which killed a man before being shot dead.

A zoo near Sochi was spared flooding on Thursday. Jeanne Zazina, Deputy Director of the Sochi zoo, said: "We are closer to the central area, not in the Adler. We are fine, no one swam away."

# Bobbi Kristina Brown moved to hospice care

THE boyfriend of Bobbi Kristina Brown has been accused of assault and theft, on the same day her family announced she was being moved into hospice care. Brown, the only child of singer Whitney Houston, was discovered face down in a bath at her Atlanta home in January. She has never regained consciousness. Her boyfriend Nick Gordon has now been accused of causing her "substantial bodily harm" in a \$10m civil case. The legal action was filed by Brown's court-appointed conservator.

Bedelia Hargrove told People magazine in a statement: "I filed this lawsuit to pursue justice on behalf of Bobbi Kristina Brown. No human being, male or female, should endure what Bobbi Kristina endured."

The legal case accuses Gordon of assault, battery, infliction of emotional distress and maintaining "the fraud that he had married Brown" after she inherited a substantial amount of money.

It claims that Bobbi Kristina confided to an unnamed person that Gordon "was not the man she thought he was" and made plans to meet them on 31 January to talk about it.

Court papers claim she never made it to the meeting and "became embroiled in a loud argument" with Gordon, which ended with her "face down in a bathtub, with her mouth swollen and another tooth knocked out".

"Even after Brown's hospitalization, and while she was in a coma, (Gordon) accessed Brown's bank account and stole in excess of \$11,000 (£7,000)," the documents say.

Gordon has yet to comment on the accusations. Last night, he posted a message about Brown on his Twitter, which read: "We keep praying, she has fought hard this long don't give up hope."

He was partly brought up by Whitney Houston, and the couple's relationship became public after Houston died.

'In God's hands now'

Police were called to Brown's home in suburban Atlanta on 31 January, in response to a "drowning". Despite months of treatment in two Atlanta hospitals and a rehab facility, including being placed in an induced coma, the 22-year-old

has never regained consciousness.

A police investigation has been launched, but no findings or

Brown's condition has continued to deteriorate, as of today, she has been

charges have been announced.

A statement released by Brown's aunt Pat Houston on behalf of the family said that "despite the great medical care at numerous facilities,

Bobbi Kristina

moved into hospice care."

"We thank everyone for their support and prayers. She is in God's hands now."

The case holds similarities to Houston's death in a hotel bath in 2012. An autopsy concluded the singer died of accidental drowning due to the effects of cocaine use and heart disease.

Houston left everything in her will to Bobbi Kristina. Brown is also the daughter of singer Bobby Brown. Her parents divorced when she was 14.





# Mother and baby SURVIVE Colombia jungle plane crash

A COLOMBIAN Air Force chief described their survival as "a miracle". Maria Nelly Murillo, 18, and her one-year-old son were found by rescuers near to where their small Cessna plane crashed in Choco province.

Ms Murillo had some injuries and burns while her baby appeared to be in good health.

#### Contact lost

The twin-engine Cessna plane, which was carrying fish and coconuts, had been flying from the town of Nuqui on the Pacific coast to Quibdo, the capital of Choco.

It disappeared from the radar of the civil aviation authorities 20 minutes into the flight. When the pilot did not respond to any calls, officials knew something was wrong and despatched a plane to search the area.

It took the search team two days until they finally spotted a white dot in the dense jungle, which turned out to

be the remains of the Cessna. It had crashed, for reasons not yet known, in the Alto Baudo region.

When the search team reached the Cessna, they found its pilot, Carlos Mario Ceballos, dead in the cockpit.

#### Glimmer of hope

There was no trace of Ms Murillo or her baby, Yudier Moreno, which the passenger list said had been on board. But according to Col Hector Carrascal of the Colombian Air Force, rescuers took hope when they noticed that the cabin door was ajar.

"It could have opened on impact, but it could have been opened from the inside," he said.

"But that's when we started to worry. We didn't have a clue what had happened to them: they could be lost in the jungle trying to survive or they could have died already."

But then the rescuers found clues which led them to believe Ms Murillo and her

baby could still be alive. Coconut shells near the plane and a discarded flip flop in the jungle lifted their hopes.

They also found the baby's birth certificate near a tree, which convinced them that Ms Murillo was trying to leave a trace of her path through the jungle.

Part of the search party scoured the jungle on foot while others flew over the area in a helicopter using a loudspeaker to shout Ms Murillo's name and urge her to return to the crash site. But for two days their search yielded no results.

#### Miracle'

Finally, on Wednesday, they located Ms Murillo about 500m from the site of the crash in a ravine on the banks of a river.

"It's a miracle. It is a very wild area and it was a catastrophic accident," Col Carrascal said. Of the baby, he said: "His mother's spirit must have given him strength to survive." The couple

were airlifted to a hospital in Quibdo. Ms Murillo told medical staff that she had managed to open the cabin door and run into the jungle as fire was spreading in the cabin. She then reportedly went back for her baby, at which time she sustained burns to her face, an arm and a leg.

Afraid the plane might explode, she walked into the jungle along the bank of a small river. Details of how she survived are still sketchy, but local media said she came across a couple of indigenous people who helped her.

She was also able to drink coconut water from the coconuts the plane had been carrying, local media said. She reportedly heard the calls over loudspeaker from the rescue helicopter which prompted her to make her way back to the crash site.

She is being treated for her injuries in hospital. Her baby son is said to be unharmed.

# Liverpool set to seal £12.5m Nathaniel Clyne deal

LIVERPOOL is close to reaching a £12.5m agreement to sign Southampton's Nathaniel Clyne, according to Sky sources.

It's reported that the Reds had seen a £10m bid rejected by Saints, who want £15m for the highly-sought-after right-back.

It is believed the Merseyside club is in discussions over a structured deal that would take the fee up towards the £15m-mark based on certain conditions that would eventually be met by the player.

Clyne, 24, has just a year left on his Southampton deal and has been stalling over a new contract amid reported interest from the Reds' north-west rivals Manchester United - and Liverpool have been keen to make Clyne their new right-back after the release of Glen Johnson.

Clyne joined Southampton from Crystal Palace in 2012 and made 41 appearances for Ronald Koeman's team last term, earning his first England cap in November.

He played the full 90 minutes in a 3-1 European qualifying victory over Slovenia, and has gone on to make four international appearances.

Liverpool has been swift in their transfer dealings so far in the current window, landing Danny Ings and James Milner on free transfers as well as young Brazilian attacker Roberto Firmino.

Former Liverpool defender and Sky Sports pundit Jamie Carragher quickly took to social media to endorse his former side's latest move in the transfer market.

Carragher said on KICCA: "I saw Nathaniel Clyne at St Mary's after a game last season and told him to sign for LFC - he took my advice!"

"I think it's another good signing for the club to go along with the other business already done."

"The early deals were a couple of squad players and also James Milner, who are all an improvement on what's currently in the squad."



## Manchester United will REJECT Bayern Munich's interest in Angel Di Maria



**BAYERN** Munich has identified Angel Di Maria as their No 1 transfer target, although sources in England insist Manchester United has no intention of selling.

Di Maria's future has been the subject of speculation after a difficult first season at Old Trafford following his club record £59.7m move from Real Madrid.

The midfielder made an encouraging start at United, scoring three goals in his first five appearances, but his only other goal came in an FA Cup tie against Yeovil and he lost his place in the side in the second half of the campaign.

The midfielder is currently on Argentina duty at the Copa America in Chile, where he is being closely watched by Bayern scouts as they weigh up a move for the 27-year-old.

Pep Guardiola's Bayern are eager to bring in a winger this summer with Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery now 31 and 32 respectively, but reporter James Cooper insists any approaches for Di Maria will be rejected by United.

"The constant message from United this summer has been that he is going nowhere, he is going to stay at Manchester United and be a big part

of Louis van Gaal's plans for next season," said Cooper.

"Our friends at Sky Deutschland have been talking about Bayern Munich being interested in Di Maria and even scouting him over at the Copa America. I don't think they are the only club doing that, but United won't budge on this and Di Maria won't be going anywhere this summer."

If Bayern cannot convince United to sell Di Maria, Sky Deutschland says Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann would be their second choice.

The France international predominantly featured centrally for Atletico last season, scoring 25 goals in 46 appearances in all competitions, but he is also comfortable on the left flank.

Meanwhile, Germany legend Franz Beckenbauer has urged Bayern midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger to reject interest from United. The World Cup-winning midfielder is on the Red Devils' list of summer targets, but Beckenbauer feels he should stay at the Allianz Arena.

"I would advise him not to go to England. He can stay here as well. This challenge, at his age, it's not what he needs," said Beckenbauer.